

Augusta Regional Transportation Study Newsletter

Issue 22

December 2004

ARTS 2004 Certification Review

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) certified ARTS for 3 more years in its October 2004 certification report. The findings are:

Strengths:

- ▶ Cooperative Planning Process
- ▶ Well developed Congestion Management System
- ▶ Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
- ▶ Traffic Control Center
- ▶ Proactive Title IV/Environmental Justice Efforts
- ▶ Proactive stance at mitigating Air Quality Issues
- ▶ Well developed Unified Planning Work Program

Recommendations:

- ▶ Revise the Memorandum of Understanding and MPO Bylaws to include new jurisdictions that are now part of the study area.
- ▶ Identify congestion caused by railroads and incorporate GDOT's Freight Study in the Congestion Management System (CMS).
- ▶ Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Document prioritization procedures; make financial sheets clear and concise; include summary of changes by year; track TIP project costs year to year.
- ▶ Long Range Transportation Plan – Include TDM results, CMS recommendations, safety considerations, environmental and socioeconomic impact, public comments and prioritization criteria; Transit projects.
- ▶ Transit – Develop a reciprocal fare agreement between Aiken County and Augusta Public Transit; update 5-year Transit Development Plans and ensure their consistency with the TIP.
- ▶ Evaluate the effectiveness of the Public Involvement Process.

Augusta Canal Authority wins Georgia Planning Award

The Georgia Planning Association presented the Augusta Canal Authority with its 2004 award for Outstanding Plan Implementation at the association's annual meeting October 14 at Brasstown Valley. The award recognized the successful achievement of the goals and initiatives envisioned in the 1993 Master Plan that outlined the Canal's preservation and development potential.

The Augusta Canal Authority's Master Plan earned the Georgia Planning Association's Award for Outstanding Planning Project ten years ago. Coming full circle, the 2004 award recognized a decade of conscientious dedication to protecting and improving the Augusta Canal as a unique local, regional and national resource.

Over the past 10 years, the Augusta Canal Authority has achieved several major administrative milestones and capital improvements totaling nearly \$34 million in public and private investments. Centered on the core themes of Preservation, Conservation, Recreation, Education and Economic Development, the Master Plan's key initiatives included:

- Designating the Augusta Canal as a National Heritage Park: *Accomplished 1996*
- Creating a Multi-use park of regional and statewide importance: *Improvements began in 1999 and continue to the present*
- Developing the canal corridor as an accessible educational resource: *\$3.3 million Canal Interpretive Center opened 2003. Tour boats launched 2003 and 2004*
- Facilitating Economic Development at edge of Downtown: *\$17 million Enterprise Mill revitalization 1998. Third Level Canal reclamation began 2003*

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We welcome two new members to the Policy Committee, Mayor Tom Cobb of Blythe, and Chairman D.B. Atkins of Hephzibah. Blythe and Hephzibah are municipalities located in Richmond County, Georgia, that were recently added to the ARTS area.

ARTS CALENDAR

Augusta meetings are usually held on the 8th Floor of the Municipal Building at 530 Greene Street, Augusta, GA. Please call ARCPC (706) 821-1796 to verify time and place.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

The Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission website includes all ARTS committee agendas and related transportation planning information. The address is:

http://www.augustaga.gov/departments/planning_zoning/

2005 ARTS CALENDAR CAC & TCC Meetings

**10:00 am, Wednesday
February 9, 2005
Endorse Final UPWP**

**10:00 am, Wednesday
March 9, 2005
Endorse Draft TIP**

**10:00 am, Wednesday
May 11, 2005
TIP Public Meeting &
Endorse Final TIP**

**10:00 am, Wednesday
August 10, 2005**

**10:00 am, Wednesday
September 14, 2005**

**10:00 am, Wednesday
November 9, 2005
Endorse Draft UPWP**

**10:00 am, Wednesday
December 14, 2005**

Policy Committee Meetings

**11:00 am, Thursday
March 3, 2005
Endorse Draft TIP &
Final UPWP**

**11:00 am, Thursday
June 2, 2005
Endorse Final TIP**

**11:00 am, Thursday
September 1, 2005**

**11:00 am, Thursday
December 1, 2005
Endorse Draft UPWP**

Aiken County Capital Projects Sales Tax Funded Road Projects

On November 2, 2004, the second round of the Aiken County Capital Projects Tax was approved by Aiken County voters. The \$114 million, 7-year tax program will fund a variety of public safety, parks and recreation, open space acquisition, general government facilities, and road construction projects. In North Augusta, \$1.65 million will finance intersection improvements on Five Notch Road and US 25. The intersections of Five Notch Road at Pisgah Road, Celeste Avenue, Heil Avenue, and Georgia Avenue will be widened and reconstructed with adequate turn lanes. The intersection of Walnut Lane and US 25 will be improved with widening and a traffic signal. North Augusta will also expend \$1.1 million on resurfacing approximately two miles of city streets in each year of the program and construct approximately two miles of sidewalks.

Two million dollars of the total package is set aside to support infrastructure associated with Phase II of I-520, the Palmetto Parkway. Depending on the need at the time of construction, the Palmetto Parkway funds may be used for the relocation and installation of utilities, right of way acquisition or access road construction required for the new US 25 interchange near Ascauga Lake Road.

Aiken County and the City of Aiken have also set aside substantial amounts of their sales tax receipts for new road construction, street resurfacing, and, in many areas of the county, initial paving of county roads.

Public Hearing for the EAC State Implementation Plan

On December 24, 2002, Georgia EPD submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) an 8-hour Ozone Early Action Compact (EAC) for the Augusta area and a Letter of Support from Columbia County supporting Augusta's 8-hour Ozone Early Action Compact (EAC).

The full EAC SIP, which details how these measures will contribute to early attainment of the 8-hour ozone standard, is to be submitted to EPA by December 31, 2004. To provide the public an opportunity to comment upon and provide input into the proposed EAC, a public hearing will be held at **7:00 p.m. on December 20, 2004 at the Julian Smith Casino, 2200 Broad Street.**

Copies may also be requested by contacting the EPD at 404/363-7000.

Georgia Statewide Intelligent Transportation System Architecture

Representatives of the Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission and the Augusta Public Transit, Emergency Management and Traffic Engineering departments recently attended a workshop in Athens to begin development of a statewide Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) architecture for Georgia. An ITS architecture is a blueprint for deployment of ITS projects. The architecture is being developed by a team of consulting firms headed by ITERIS, Inc. under a contract with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).

In the first round of workshops stakeholders helped identify transportation, emergency management, transit and other systems that can benefit by sharing ITS information. Stakeholders also rated the relative importance of various ITS services to the statewide architecture. Consultants will hold a series of one-on-one meetings with stakeholders in early December. Another round of workshops, to focus on implementation of the architecture, is scheduled for January 2005. The Georgia ITS architecture is to be completed in March 2005.

For more information please visit the Georgia Regional ITS Architecture Website at www.gritsarchitecture.com.



St. Sebastian/Greene Street Extension Update

This project received environmental approval on September 8, 2004 and a Preliminary Field Plan Review was held on October 14, 2004. Right-of-Way Plans are currently being completed, with land acquisition anticipated to begin in late November/early December 2004. The Wrightsboro Road right-of-way funding is being reprogrammed to pay for acquiring the right-of-way for this project.

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JANUARY 2005
NO MEETINGS
FEBRUARY 2005
CAC/TCC: 9TH, 10:00 A.M. ENDORSE FINAL UPWP
MARCH 2005
POLICY: 3RD, 11:00 A.M. ENDORSE DRAFT TIP & FINAL UPWP CAC/TCC: 9TH, 10:00 A.M. ENDORSE DRAFT TIP

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